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The Church's Opportunities in World Affairs

Address by

JOHN FOSTER DULLES

before the WORLD CONVENTION OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST
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This is an inspiring occasion. Here a great company, of many thousands, representing many lands, has been drawn together by a common belief in a God through whose Fatherhood all men are made brothers. But, as we meet here, we do not forget that also in many lands thousands are working feverishly to perfect ways to destroy each other in mass. There is nothing new in such dualism. It has existed since, in the beginning, man ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. But never has it seemed so imperative that good should dominate and that ways of peace should supplant the ways of war.

War Now an Intolerable Institution.

For a long time war has been an accepted institution. Crude and unchristian though it was, it did some things which had to be done. It was the way of international change and there was no other way. By war great empires rose and fell, and the map of the world underwent constant change. That was not a good way. But on balance,

* This address was prepared prior to Mr. Dulles' designation as U. S. Delegate to the next Assembly of the United Nations and represents personal, not official, views.

men created more than they destroyed. A new civilization *did* develop on the ruins of Greece and Rome, and the world's population *did* multiply and enjoy greatly increased well being.

It seems, however, that war and civilization can no longer go on together. Under modern conditions, war destroys more than peace can create. Efforts are being made to outlaw some of the new weapons. But science makes possible destruction so vast by means so varied that it is unlikely that war will again be a socially tolerable institution. That probably is a final verdict.

Peaceful Change the Alternative to War.

That war is intolerable is a first conclusion. But that, alone, is not enough. If an institution plays, even though badly, an inevitable role, you cannot simply abolish it. You must put something in its place. Even those who hate war the most see how impossible it would be to cancel out all of the political changes wrought by past wars and restore the international position of 500 years ago or 100 years ago or even 50 years ago.

There must be either a peaceful way of change or a violent way of change. In a living world that is inexorable law. The Kellogg-Briand Pact sought merely to abolish war. That will never work. The task is not negative, but positive. It calls for constructive action. Men must develop peaceful ways whereby the international position can be kept in reasonable accord with preponderant human wills.

Moral Power Adequate for Peace.

Moral power is quite capable of assuming control of the situation. It can be the most powerful force in the world. That is not a mere pious hope. It is the judgment of every realist throughout history. It was Napoleon who said that "in war, moral considerations make up three-fourths of the game". It was Admiral Mahan who said that physical force was useful only "to give moral ideas time to take root".

President Wilson, *after* the beginning of World War I, and President Roosevelt *after* the beginning of World War II, did much to consolidate and marshal world sentiment to insure Germany's defeat. They did that through great statements of aims, such as the Fourteen Points and the Atlantic Charter, which appealed to the moral conscience of the world. Thereby they became great war Presidents. But, as I have said elsewhere and now say again, we want no more great war Presidents. The world demands leadership which will frame issues and organize moral power, not to win war, but to win peace.

It may be said that in time of war the moral issues seem clearer than they really are, that there is an exaggerated sense of self-righteousness, that the need of discipline and sacrifice then provides a spectacular occasion for displaying the weight of moral power, and that war provides more exciting possibilities of change than does peace. All of that may be true. Even so, it does not disprove our estimate of the power of moral force. It only proves that, in war, there is an alert and effective use, perhaps misuse, of moral power. By contrast, during peace, the moral issues usually seem blurred and moral forces are quiescent or so confused and divided as to be impotent. It seems as though war had

a near monopoly of moral fervor and that little remains wherewith to mold the peace. It is that that must be changed. The world will never have peace so long as men reserve, for war, the finest human qualities. Peace, no less than war, requires idealism and self-sacrifice and a righteous and dynamic faith.

The United Nations as Moral Mechanism.

Men are beginning to find the way to make moral power work during peace to preserve peace. The present United Nations organization is designed for that, largely as a result of Christian effort.

When President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill met in the summer of 1941 to define their peace aims they failed to include world organization as a peace goal. So the Atlantic Charter was silent on this subject. It was the Christian churches which then struck the first strong blow for world organization. Working in unison, in the United States and in other free countries, they built up sentiment to make good this grave omission. It took a little more than two years. Then the Foreign Ministers of the Big Three announced that they would seek the creation of a world organization.

That was a first great decision. It remained to be decided what kind of an organization it would be.

Many thought that the new world organization should be primarily a military organization to perpetuate the existing war alliance. That was the conception which dominated the representatives of the Soviet Union, Great Britain and the United States when they met at Dumbarton Oaks in the summer of 1944 to make a first draft of the charter.

But our church people did not think much of an organization which would be primarily military and which would depend chiefly on physical force. So they worked hard to make their point of view prevail. It did largely prevail at the San Francisco Conference of 1945, thanks in great part to the small nations, which did not want to be placed permanently under the military dictatorship of the three big powers.

So, the San Francisco Conference radically changed the plan of Dumbarton Oaks. It emphasized the United Nations General Assembly as a place where the representatives of all states, big and little, would meet and discuss any problems of international relations, and where even the greatest nations could be required to submit their conduct to the judgment of world opinion. The conception of justice was introduced and the Assembly was authorized to establish agencies to promote human welfare. The San Francisco Conference saw peace, not as a condition of enforced stagnation, but as a condition of healthy growth.

How the United Nations Works.

The United Nations has now been functioning for over a year and a half and the Assembly is shortly to hold its fourth meeting. It has revealed great possibilities. Of course, it has not settled everything. Indeed, the international situation is gravely troubled. But the United Nations has shown that it need not be a mere spectator. It can do something. It can call every nation's international acts to the bar of public opinion, with confidence that that will have healthy practical consequences.

We have seen how, in time of war, the public verdict of right and wrong exercises a powerful effect. The United

Nations has begun to show how, in time of peace, public opinion can exercise a powerful effect. At the San Francisco Conference and at the three subsequent Assemblies of the United Nations political leaders from many lands have presented views on many matters. Always the speakers were obviously conscious of the fact that they were talking to representatives of some two thousand million people, of whom many millions personally followed, by press and radio, what was said and done. Every speaker presented his case with regard to what he thought was world opinion and he tried to get its backing. Almost always the different governments presented their positions otherwise than they would have done had they been meeting in secret and if world opinion were not sitting in judgment. That is a fact of great moment. It does not make future war impossible. It can make war less likely.

You may recall the school book axiom that things equal to the same thing are equal to each other. If world opinion can bring the foreign policies of the different nations toward harmony with the world's moral judgment, then those policies will automatically move toward harmony with each other.

United Nations Influence on Concrete National Policies.

The United Nations can be used in this way much more than is yet the practice. It ought to be normal that major international policies which create fear or resentment anywhere should be subjected to the scrutiny of the Assembly. The Assembly might even, by a vote of confidence or of non-confidence, pass judgment on the compatibility of such policies with peace and justice. For example, the so-called "Truman Policy", in relation to Greece and Turkey, was

looked upon by the Soviet Union as unfriendly to it. The recent Soviet action in Hungary was characterized by the President of the United States as outrageous. Most Americans do not consider the two policies to be comparable. We believe that our government's policy was designed to preserve small nations' independence and that Soviet policy destroyed a small nation's independence. But in such matters the final judgment ought not to be a national judgment, but an international judgment. From the standpoint of the United Nations, the significant fact is that both policies increased tension between great nations. As such, each policy ceased to be of merely national concern—it became impressed with an international interest.

The United Nations Charter provides that the Assembly may discuss any situation, regardless of origin, which it deems likely to impair friendly relations among nations. The situations referred to surely qualify under this provision. The United States should welcome, not resent, any move to put its action in Greece and Turkey on the agenda of the Assembly for discussion. The same should be true of the Soviet Union in relation to Hungary. These matters are being discussed elsewhere, wherever men talk of peace. Why should they not be discussed at the "town meeting of the world", which was especially designed to make discussion productive of peace? If any nation is afraid to have its international policies discussed, that is good proof that they ought to be discussed. In the Assembly the sponsors of questioned policies would explain them and welcome an expression of the confidence of the Assembly. The verdict would not have any legal consequences. But an unfavorable judgment would doubtless influence the future of the condemned policy and make more likely its

modification or abandonment. No nation, however strong, will lightly defy a verdict which seems to reflect the informed and aroused moral judgment of mankind.

We have had this week a striking demonstration. The Dutch stayed their military hand in Indonesia in response to the call of the United Nations Security Council. That was not because the United Nations could have compelled them, for it has, as yet, no military contingents and no police force. Indeed, it is not certain that the Security Council resolution was legally in order. But that resolution registered the moral judgment of a large portion of mankind. That was the essential fact and it was that fact which the Dutch Government respected. The Indonesian situation is far from being settled. But at least we have one more illustration of how world opinion can influence national conduct.

World Government Not Yet Feasible.

Of course the United Nations processes of which I speak are elementary and inadequate. Some societies have much more elaborate procedures for enabling the moral force of the community to keep order and assure peaceful evolution. The United Nations Charter did not attempt to reproduce those processes. That is not because the authors of the Charter were politically stupid or reactionary. It is because they knew that political institutions are not created merely by fine words. They depend on human foundations, and it is not practicable to create a world structure which outweighs the available world foundation. President Wilson said, "peace must be planted upon the tested foundations of political liberty". Those foundations are not yet world-wide. On the contrary, free societies represent only about 20% of the population of the world, and

even within them there are many inadequacies, notably as race discrimination is practiced. About 80% of the people of the world have no tested institutions of self-government. Some are the dependent colonial peoples. Some, like the peoples of India and certain Arab states, are only now moving from dependency to full independence. Some, like the peoples of China and Indonesia are in chaos and strife. Some live under constitutions which, in words, vest sovereignty in the people, but in fact they are ruled by a small group which perpetuate themselves in power subject to change by revolution. Some are under the war rule of victors. Some, like the Russian people and others within the orbit of Soviet influence, are governed by dictatorships which call themselves "dictatorship of the proletariat".

To develop free societies is a long, hard process. It is nowhere perfected. But with all their defects, the free societies represent something precious in the world. They best reflect the Christian concept of the nature of man and his relationship to God and to fellow man. They best assure progressive peaceful change to what may, from time to time, seem the greatest good of the greatest number. They best assure that government will be responsive to enlightened moral judgment. It would not advance us if we subjected free societies to a world government which today could not be other than despotic. That would sacrifice a living hope to the lure of a mirage.

Development of International Processes.

I do not conclude that present inadequacies should be accepted as permanent. On the contrary, they should be remedied and they can be remedied, though not all at once. In the United Nations Security Council the veto power

should be curtailed. The veto ought not to apply to administrative matters. Also, no single nation should be free to block an investigation of the facts or the carrying out of particular international policies which have been agreed to. The biggest task, however, is to improve the foundation. The western democracies, largely through the influence of Christianity, have developed for themselves free political institutions. But they have not built broadly enough. It is that deficit which is the most serious limiting factor. It is that deficit which, as rapidly as possible, must be made good.

Summary of Task.

Let us now seek to summarize the task and the opportunity which lie before us.

First, we must see, as most do see, that under modern conditions war is an intolerable institution.

Second, we must also see, as many do not see, that it is ineffectual merely to oppose war. Opposition to war can be successful only as it also develops new institutions for coping with international problems.

Third, we must see the United Nations as a place where the moral conscience of the world can drive the nations into following policies of justice, righteousness and concord.

Fourth, we must see the possibility of improving international procedures. To some extent this can be done now, within the framework of the United Nations. Major improvement requires, in the world, more societies of freedom.

Fifth and finally, we must act in the light of what we see.

Special Christian Responsibility.

This great audience meets as a Christian audience. I appeal to you as such. In all of these matters the Christian people of the world carry a special load of responsibility.

What is the need? The need is for men and women who can see what now is and what can be. Christ put particular emphasis on vision and light. He taught men to see truly and to avoid the hatred, hypocrisy and selfishness which blind men or warp their visions. If Christians do not produce the needed vision, what can we expect but that mankind will stumble?

The need is for more effective use of moral power. The moral law, happily, is a universal law. It is reflected by many great religions. Even without religion there is general agreement on "right" and "wrong" in their crude and obvious aspects. That fact is of immense value. It is why, even today, moral concepts can have world-wide influence. But Christians believe that, through Christ, the moral law has been revealed with unique clarity. Christians ought, therefore, to be especially qualified to form moral judgments which are discerning and to focus them at the time and place where they can be effective.

The need is for full use of the present great possibilities of the United Nations. It was Christians most of all who wanted a world organization which would depend primarily on moral, rather than physical power. They have it. Now it is up to them to generate the moral power required to make the organization work.

The need is to build the foundation for a more adequate world organization. That foundation is a world of free societies, and free society depends, in turn, on individuals

who exemplify Christian qualities of self-control and of human brotherhood, and who treat freedom not as license, but as occasion for voluntary cooperation for the common good. So, again, Christians have the great responsibility.

The need is for effort on a world-wide scale. The Christian church is a world-wide institution. Christianity is not a national or regional religion, nor a class religion nor a race religion. It transcends every known human difference. That fact peculiarly qualifies Christians to discharge tasks of world-wide import.

So it is that, as we analyze the need, Christian responsibility emerges as an inescapable fact. It is a fact that ought to have practical consequences. If Christians are to play their clearly indicated part, they must have better organization, more unity of action and more emphasis on Christianity as a world religion. To some extent, these things are happening. The World Council of Churches is completing its organization, interrupted by war. Already under its auspices and those of the International Missionary Council there has been created a Commission of the Churches on International Affairs. The American churches are raising large restoration funds to help churches elsewhere. Missionary activity is reviving. Two great international church convocations are planned—one for 1948, one for 1949.

The Urgency.

All of that is good, but it is not good enough. The present rate of movement will not quickly produce a powerful impact on world affairs. The need is urgent. We are dealing with the typical war cycle. The first phase is war. The second phase is moral fervor, mounting to win victory

for justice and righteousness. The third phase is victory itself and the fourth phase is moral relaxation, letting the international situation slip back into the rigidities and stagnation which breed new war. That is the cycle which must be broken if there is to be just and durable peace. At the moment we are in the particular phase of the war cycle where, most readily, it can be broken.

This is no time for moral vacation. Further effort is imperative. Of course, people feel tired and to some extent disillusioned. But that mood would quickly pass if only men's eyes were opened to the immense possibilities that lie before them. If many today are lethargic, it is only because they do not see what, if seen, would surely stir them to eager action.

May God give us the vision to see clearly. Out of that vision will come the ability to plan wisely and the will to act strongly. Thus may we become a living part of that Tree of Life whereof the leaves serve the healing of the nations.

